In the first volume the political state of the Kingdom is treated, in the second volume the state of its finance, and in the third its economic state. In the fourth volume there is the chorography of Campania, the two Principalities and the Sannium, and in the fifth volume that of the three provinces of the Abruzzi and the three provinces of Apulia. Finally, in the sixth and last volume [there is] the chorography of Calabria. In an appendix to the fourth volume there is the description of Naples. The Island of Sicily shall be treated in a separate volume.27

More than singularly thorough, the nature of Galanti’s study was utterly unprecedented in aiming at a disclosure of what heretofore had been regarded as secrets of state. Earlier topographers of the Kingdom had mostly been amateurs, who had been able to offer little more than a second-hand survey of the geography, political institutions, and rituals of the Neapolitan provinces for an audience eager to learn about the natural wonders and political formalities of that modern nation.28 By contrast, Galanti exercised his carte blanche to obtain privy information about the Kingdom from its various administrative departments and to present, analyse, and publicize information that had hitherto been known only to the Court. As Galanti proudly advertised in the Description . . . of the Sicilies,

Our enterprise has merited the approval of His Majesty for the part concerning the Kingdoms of Naples and Sicily; and so that it result exact, he has ordered that the Royal Secretaries of Ecclesiastical Affairs and of His Majesty’s Estate and Customs [Azienda] minister all the information and materials necessary for the disclosure of the true state of the provinces and the commerce that they practice.29

Needless to say, disclosure of this sort demanded the cooperation of the Kingdom’s various chambers, secretaries, and tribunals, and Galanti’s relations with these bodies were often far from easy. Galanti often complained in print that in spite of the support of the king, his project had been continually obstructed by members of the royal administration – although “two ministers of state communicated to me the will of the King, and they ordered many tribunals and public offices to provide me with the information requisite for the composition

28 Among the earlier works of political geography were Scipione Mazzella, Descrittione del Regno di Napoli (Naples, 1601); Ottavio Beltrano, Breve Descrittione del Regno di Napoli (Naples, 1640); and Giovanni Battista Pacichelli, Il Regno di Napoli in Prospettiva (Naples, 1703).